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563 526 [178] [505] of the latter, however, was part of these teams for many years and was known and admired by the entire city. About 30 years ago football started to become professional; today there are few important clubs for amateurs. In the present phase that of professionals, there is no restriction against mulatto or black players. 563 542 555 554 They are acclaimed with enthusiasm, and many people consider them exceptionally suited for this game because of their agility and their skill. The most important and the richest clubs wrangle over these players and offer them very large sums so that they will consent to play on their teams. Thus several of them are made up almost exclusively of dark players. The most popular footballers of Bahia are almost all black or dark mulattoes. It should be noted, however, that the fame and the popularity of these sportsmen, in large part recruited from the lowest strata of the population, do not confer on them a higher rank; they have access to certain groups who are particularly interested in the sport; but they do not thereby acquire the right to attend the recreational celebrations of certain clubs, except on very rare occasions. Another aspect of football is that its "teams" are organized and supported by associations that generally also carry on recreational activities and are directed with passionate devotion, even at the price of pecuniary sacrifices, by rich and influential people in commerce, the liberal professions, and the bureaucracy. To take part in the management of one of these associations or on the committee that co-ordinates sports activities throughout the State of Bahia is greatly coveted: this permits one to affirm his prestige and to obtain political support from players and from thousands of fans of the sport. Some politicians distinguish themselves by the effort they make to obtain subventions and other resources for the sporting associations. According to the social level of each of these institutions, the opportunities that colored persons have to take part in their management vary. An informant who for many years was a member of the aforementioned committee cites the names of various mulattoes and Blacks who, by their wealth and their devotion, attained the posts of president and of director of several of these organizations, as well as of the sports federation of the State.